

This amendment is hereby issued to notify all potential offerors of the questions received during the ten-day period specified in the solicitation and to provide answers to these questions. The closing date of the solicitation is **NOT** extended.

Questions and Answers

1. **Question:** On page 37 and under “**Work to be Performed,**” see lines 6 and 7. This is the first mention of CPMSA in Attachment One (1). All other references are to USI. Is it correct to assume that the evaluation under this task will cover both the USI and the CPMSA awardees? Are the SSI and the RSI programs excluded?

Answer: Both the USI and the CPMSA Programs were assimilated into the new USP Program and should be included in the USP evaluation. SSI and RSI are **not** included in USP.

2. **Question:** On page 37 and under “**Work to be Performed,**” see the last sentence. Could you provide details about the referenced two assessment and accountability field-based studies being conducted? Who is doing these studies and where might one obtain the work done to date?

Answer: The two studies referenced are by Kathy Borman and Jason Kim. Abstracts for these studies are attached below. However, please note that these studies are still in planning and early development; there are no results to report at this time. They were referenced to provide guidance to offerors that other sources of information shall need integration into the evaluation as it develops, and offerors should note that they were included more for future reference than for preparing a proposal in response to this solicitation.

#9874322/How Reform Works: An Evaluative Study of NSF's Urban Systemic Initiative--

Abstract: The proposed study will 1) determine the impact of the USI program on student achievement and the learning infrastructure in urban school districts and 2) develop an inferential causal model that related the NSF drivers and other key elements to the outcomes observed. Systemic model analyses will be conducted from five perspectives:

1. Across 20 USI sites -reviewing and comparing systemic reform progress across the 20 USI sites, identifying successful USI models based on student outcomes, and further exploring the key success factors using a statistical inference/causal model.
2. By USI cohort - measuring the systemic impact by duration and intensity of involvement in systemic reform efforts among the existing three cohorts
3. Longitudinal per site – analyzing longitudinal data to measure system effectiveness before and after the implementation of urban systemic initiatives.

(Continued)

4. USI vs. Non-SI - conducting research on the differential impact of USI and allowing attribution of impact by comparing USI to non SI sites.
5. National context - reviewing the literature and survey data from other major reform efforts to identify additional significant cross-cutting variables (in addition to the drivers) that can inform development of an inferential model.

A range of dissemination activities have been proposed, including CD-ROM USI Fact Book, yearly evaluative research report, periodic newsletters, materials for the NSF website, and monographs.

#9874246/Assessing the Impact of the National Science Foundation's Urban Systemic Initiative--

Abstract: The proposed study will:

- 1) assess the extent to which USI projects have been able to effect the system of NSF drivers and whether causal relationships among the drivers can be identified in measurable terms;
- 2) examine impacts of curriculum reform in elementary and secondary schools; and
- 3) investigate the interdependent roles of leadership, local resources, policies at all levels, and stakeholders' involvement in efforts to improve student achievement in mathematics and science.

Four USI cities (Chicago, Miami, Memphis, and El Paso will be compared, both district-wide and in a sample of early and late cohort elementary and secondary schools. The research design proposed is a multiple method strategy consisting of three investigations:

- 1) Mathematics and Science Attainment study -- developing a structural equation model of the hypothesized causal relationship among the latent variables (Drivers).
- 2) Study of the Enacted Mathematics and Science Curriculum -- using the Measures of constructivist curricula that have been implemented.
- 3) Policy Study -- conducting a policy analysis that will examine coordination and alignment in state and national educational policies affecting districts and schools.

3. **Question:** In addition to preparing a budget for each of the three tasks, should an overall summary budget, which would have a breakout of the three tasks and the total for all three tasks, be submitted?

Answer: Yes, a summary budget should be included, but it is not necessary to break out the three tasks within the summary. Such a summary budget will assist the Government in performance of cost and price analyses of offers.

4. **Question:** On page 69 and under “**D. PAST PERFORMANCE VOLUME,**” the RFP requests the submission of past performance information for “all contracts for requirements of a similar nature awarded to the organization during the past three years, completed or in progress, for Federal, state, or local governments, or private sector sources in excess of \$1,000,000 on prime contractor efforts, and \$500,000 on subcontractor efforts.” Since the number of contracts and subcontracts may be sizable for a particular organization, we are respectfully requesting the government to limit the number of prime contracts and subcontracts for past performance.

Question: Attachment (4), Contract Listing, that appears on page 44 of the RFP asks for a separate form “for each contract awarded to the organization within the past three years.” For a company of our size, that could be well over one hundred contracts. Is that really what is intended? It would make more sense to ask for those contracts that are of relevance to the requested work.

Answer: Offerors must submit their past performance (PP) information as requested on pages 69 and 70 of the solicitation with the following exceptions:

Instead of providing PP information for a “three year period,” offerors may provide PP information for a one, two or three year period based on the following criteria:

1. If offerors have at least 10 contract references that have been in effect for the past 12 months, they may provide PP information for this period and must include all CONTRACTS for REQUIREMENTS OF A SIMILAR NATURE during this period.
 2. If offerors cannot meet the condition in 1. above but have at least 10 contract references (awarded or in progress) for the past two years, they may provide PP information for this two-year period and must include all CONTRACTS for REQUIREMENTS OF A SIMILAR NATURE during that two year period.
 3. If offerors cannot meet the conditions in either 1. or 2. above, they must provide PP information for a three year period and must include all CONTRACTS for REQUIREMENTS OF A SIMILAR NATURE during that three-year period.
5. **Question:** It is clear that Attachment 4, Contract Listing, will be completed by the offeror and returned with the proposal. Is it the intent of the government to provide Attachment 5, Contractor Past Performance Evaluation, to offerors for informational purposes only?

Answer: Yes, this was provided to offerors for informational purposes only. The Government will solicit past performance information by having the offerors' clients complete Attachment 5.

6. **Question:** Should Attachment 6, Client Authorization Letter, be prepared by the offeror and mailed to client by the offeror? If mailed by the offeror, should copies be included in the proposal submitted to the government?

Answer: As stated in Section L, page 70, the third paragraph, an organization **may wish** to furnish a letter, such as the sample at Attachment 6, to commercial customers it feels may be reluctant to release information about a business relationship. If such a letter is used, the Government does not require copies of such correspondence in an offeror's proposal.

7. **Question:** Is the information requested on pages 64 and 65 in addition to the information to be provided in the Past Performance Volume? Should the five examples of relevant experience be inclusive for the prime and subcontractors, or should it be up to five examples for each organization?

Answer: Yes, this information is to be included in the Technical Proposal Volume, and it will be evaluated by the Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP). The Past Performance evaluations will be determined by the responses of the offeror's clients (based on their judgement of the offeror's past performance), not by the evaluation of the TEP. However, it is understood that there will likely be overlap of the projects identified in both the Technical Proposal Volume and the Past Performance Volume.

The most germane relevant experience would be five examples of the proposed team of prime and subcontractors. However, any combination of projects either by the proposed team or by each of the individual organizations in the team up to a total of five examples inclusive of all organizations may be used.

8. **Question:** Is it ethical and acceptable to join more than one organization's team for the evaluation contract?

Answer: While this is neither unacceptable or unethical, the NSF Program Office (EHR/REC) is concerned about the level of commitment that a team could bring to these projects and will consider this component in its technical evaluation. This concern for commitment refers primarily to institutions becoming part of more than one team rather than individual consultants.